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HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR: AN INQUIRY INTO
THEORIES OF HUMAN NATURE AND THEIR ADEQUACY
AS EXPLANATIONS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

by



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR: AN INQUIRY INTO THEORIES OF HUMAN NATURE AND THEIR ADEQUACY AS EXPLANATIONS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR, submitted by Douglas Kontou, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The notion of Human Nature is often called upon to carry the burden of a great number of arguments:

(i) All men, we are told, are motivated to action by the same basic desires (needs, instincts, drives). Unity is given to a great variety of human behaviour if we see them as emanating from a single source.

(ii) Given that human nature is what it is, then social institutions and political organisations ought to be such and such. Human nature is the one unchangeable constant in a varying social system.

(iii) Given that human nature describes certain basic and common needs, then the 'good man' is a man that has had these needs satisfied. (Just as a good plant is one that has had its needs satisfied). Good and bad are determined in terms of the basic human requirements.

Theories of human nature, therefore, have powerful consequences. It is important that one should be clear about what exactly is involved in this notion of 'a human nature'.

Statements that assert something about the nature or essence of man are by no means restricted to philosophers. We have on the one hand the traditional, and largely speculative claims, of Plato, Hobbes, and Rousseau. But we have also the more scientific claims of psychologists (Freud, Maslow, Fromm) and anthropologists (Lorenz, Ardrey, Morris). Psychologists and anthropologists claim new insights for why we do the things that we do. They give explanations of human behaviour in terms of general and basic laws. These generalisations turn out to be descriptions of human nature.

I argue that the scientific enterprise of formulating such general laws for the purpose of explaining human action is radically misconceived.

How does the human nature theorist arrive at his theory? That is, how is one supposed to make this discovery about a human essence?

What do we look for; where do we look for it; and how do we go about discovering it? These are important questions that need to be asked of both the psychologist and the anthropologist. They will lead us to both a clearer understanding of the kind of argument involved in their claims, and will also bring to the forefront the underlying assumptions in their position.

Human nature theorists employ a number of terms that seem to be essential to the theories. Terms like 'desire', 'need', 'drive', and 'instinct' function as 'primary elements' because any formulation of a general law that purports to have explanatory force with regards to human behaviour must employ terms that are generally and ordinarily employed to explain particular actions. Explanation of human behaviour by reference to the general law achieves a certain plausibility by giving the impression of doing what we ordinarily do when we explain another's behaviour, while at the same time claiming scientific status for the explanation.

Concentrating, therefore, in particular on the psychologist's use of 'need' (viz. Maslow: 'all men need love'), and the anthropologist's use of 'instinct' (viz. Ardrey and Morris: 'all men are born with the instinct for aggression'), I attempt to show that these scientific explanations of human behaviour are incoherent for they depend on the 'ordinary' use of these terms to achieve plausibility while at the same time they depend on a 'scientific' use to legitimise their conclusions.

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SECTION I HUMAN NATURE CLAIMS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

At the beginning of the 'Leviathan', Hobbes announces -- "Whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does think, opine, reason, feare, etc., and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know, what are the thoughts and Passions of all other men".¹ By this procedure, we will, in other words, discover a nature which is universally human; a nature which is common to all men, in virtue of their being men.

This paper is concerned with the notion of a human nature. It is an attempt to get clear about and make sense of views that claim something general about the character and essence of all men. It is concerned therefore, with the status of theories of human nature. But every theory of human nature carries with it one important consequence; namely, the consequence of it functioning as an explanation of human behaviour. And this matter of explaining human behaviour is the second main interest of the paper. To say that all men are motivated by some desire, need, or instinct, is at the same time to give an explanation of why men behave in the way that they do. It is not a consequence that human nature theorists wish to avoid; on the contrary, it is often the main purpose for their embarking on such enquiries in the first place. They want to explain why men act as they do. The general question is this: How are we to understand the concept of a human nature? With this there is a related question about the kind of explanation they offer: What kind of explanation of human behaviour is it that has as its starting point a statement about the nature of all men?

The concept of the natural man is appealed to for support of a political theory by both Hobbes and Rousseau.² On the one hand Hobbes enjoins us to accept his premiss that every individual has an internal nature that is essentially egocentric. Man can be moved to do nothing that is not in the end of some advantage to himself. The natural condition of mankind, where men behave according to their natural desires, is a condition in which life is 'nasty, brutish, and short'. For Hobbes, as it was for Glaucon, the very existence of society and law is

to be explained as a compromise between the inevitable aggressive and self-seeking nature of men and the fear of being destroyed oneself. And this is not a forgotten idea. Compare Hobbes' view with the following more recent remark by Lorenz -- "It is a fact worthy of deep meditation that for all we know the bond of personal friendship was evolved by the necessity for certain individuals to cease fighting each other in order more effectively to combat other fellow members of the species."³ Things do not seem to have changed very much.

Rousseau's supporting pillar to his political theory is painted a different colour. Whereas Hobbes' is depressingly black, that of Rousseau is pure white. Men have a nature that is not essentially evil, but good. In the Preface to 'Discourse on the Origin of Inequality', Rousseau observes the following:

Throwing aside all those scientific books which teach us only to see men such as they have made themselves and contemplating the first and most simple operations of the human soul, I think I can perceive in it two principles prior to reason, one of them deeply interesting us in our own welfare and preservation and the other exciting a natural repugnance at seeing any of our own species suffer pain or death.⁴

Above all he warns us, "Let us not conclude with Hobbes that because man has no idea of goodness, he must naturally be wicked".⁵

Thus, where Hobbes talks of man's destructive selfishness, Rousseau talks of man's inherent sympathetic goodness. What they both agree on, however, is the necessity of a premiss that postulates a common and unchangeable human nature; one that will provide, in part, an explanation of present human behaviour and also act as a basis for prescribing or justifying a particular mode of life or social set-up.

Today, although the method of enquiry has become immensely more complex than the simple Hobbesian call for introspection, the attempts to discover the 'passions' common to all men have by no means been abandoned. Psychologists and anthropologists are forever claiming new insights into the character and nature of man.

Freud's psychoanalytic work led him to conclude that all men are basically aggressive and destructive. If men are left to themselves to pursue their natural objectives, they will only succeed in destroy-

ing themselves. There is in all men a tendency to aggression; it is an innate, independent, instinctual disposition.

Another psychologist, who attempts to discern 'man's essential inner nature', is Abraham Maslow. He comes up with conclusions contrary to those of Freud. "Freud", he says, "supplied us with the sick half of psychology, and we must now fill it out with the healthy half".⁶ Maslow agrees with Freud that there is something called 'the core of the individual self', 'the raw material' that is 'to be reacted to by the person, by his significant others, by his environment, etc.'. The disagreement between them, is over what is to constitute this human essence. Maslow implicitly denies that man is by nature aggressive. All men are born with certain basic needs and drives. Among the most important of these basic needs is the need for love -- "it characterizes every human being that is born". Violence and aggression are not part of man's natural make-up; they are reactive evils brought about as a result of man's inability, through social pressures, to satisfy these basic needs.⁷

We might mention here a view very similar to Maslow's, that of Erich Fromm. "The deepest need of man", he writes, "is the need to overcome his separateness, to leave the prison of his aloneness".⁸ This can only be satisfied by 'mature love'.

To complete the picture, or perhaps enlarge it, I want to mention two writers, who, for my purposes I shall call anthropologists, and whose conclusions turn out to be explanations of human social behaviour in terms of general discoveries about the nature of man. They seem to differ from the psychologists only with regards to the objects of study and with regards to the kind of method employed. The results, however, turn out to be very similar.

Robert Ardrey, in 'The Territorial Imperative' writes: "We act as we do for reasons of our evolutionary past, not our cultural present, and our behaviour is as much a mark of our species as is the shape of the human thigh bone".⁹ Man's contemporary character is determined by his hunting past, with its concomitant aggression and violence, which, if not given an outlet in war, will find outlets in

internal strife. Aggression is healthy, it is innate and it is ineradicable. The futility of complaining about the Cold War is, therefore, obvious; since it is, after all, necessary.

A further statement of this kind of approach is to be found in Desmond Morris' popular book, 'The Naked Ape'. "Our unbelievably complicated civilizations will be able to prosper only if we design them in such a way that they do not clash with or tend to suppress our basic animal demands".¹⁰ Morris proceeds to give an explanation and 'objective understanding' of every aspect (and I do not exaggerate) of 'the present-day behaviour of our species' in terms of these animal demands. From the marriage institution (the pair-bond) right down to the removal of one's spectacles in conversation with others in order to avoid the animal 'threat-stare'.

The above examples are meant to give an indication of the kinds of things that are said to constitute the essential nature of man. These are the kinds of things we are meant to understand by the notion of a 'human nature'. The picture that emerges is one that has as its main theme the idea of a hard core of human nature; every human being that is born is characterized by this hard core. This hard core is unalterable and unchanging; external circumstances may change but the 'original stuff' remains untouched. It may be discerned in the behaviour of every individual. The description of the hard core varies with the particular theory of human nature. The important terms in the description are terms like 'needs', 'desires', 'instincts', and 'drives'. I shall say more about these simple elements in the description of the hard core when we come to discuss in more detail the general argument for a theory of human nature. For the moment let us follow Maslow in stating the basic assumption of human nature theorists in the following way: "We have, each of us, an essentially biologically based inner nature, which is to some degree 'natural', instinctive, given, and, in a certain limited sense, unchangeable, or at least unchanging".¹¹ The important task is to discover it.

But why is it thought important to concern oneself with discovering a human essence? The answer to this question may be found in

the answer to another question; i.e. what kind of conclusions have been thought to follow from a theory of human nature? We must turn again to some examples. At the very beginning of the 'Social Contract', Rousseau makes his purpose perfectly clear -- "I mean to enquire if, in the civil order, there can be any sure and legitimate rule of administration, men being taken as they are and laws as they might be".¹² The view expressed here is not an uncommon one in political philosophy. It is a view that sees man as the constant factor in a system of varying social relations and social structures. If we can discover what men are really like, what man's basic and unalterable needs and desires are, then the best kind of social and political organisation for men, seems to become a matter of calculation. The best society will be one that takes into account and caters for man's 'natural demands'. On a less sophisticated level we are often, in many common political arguments, enjoined to abolish social institutions on the ground that they repress human nature, and, even more often, we are dissuaded from doing so on the ground that it cannot be changed. A theory of human nature, therefore, has consequences for a political theory.

By a similar argument, it has often been thought to have consequences for ethical theories. In discussing the question of what constitutes the point of morality, both Elizabeth Anscombe and Philippa Foot turn to the idea of what men need. In 'Moral Beliefs', Mrs. Foot tells us that something can only count as a moral reason if it "can be shown to be such that it is necessarily connected with what a man wants".¹³ Instead of 'what man wants', Miss Anscombe talks of 'human flourishing'. But the point is the same; a man is held to flourish only when his needs are satisfied. The connection between a psychology of man and a theory of values is made explicit in the following passage from Maslow:

Observe that if these assumptions are proved true, they promise a scientific ethics, a court of ultimate appeal for the determination of good and bad, of right and wrong. The more we learn about man's natural tendencies, the easier it will be to tell him how to be good, how to be happy, how to be fruitful, how to respect himself, how to fulfill his highest potentialities. This amounts to

automatic solution of many of the personality problems of the future. The thing to do seems to be to find out what one is really like inside, deep down, as a member of the human species and as a particular individual.¹⁴

Indeed, discovering a human essence promises as much as this and more!

A third consequence which follows from any statement about what men are 'really like inside' is the one we noted at the beginning, namely, that the statement seems to have explanatory force with regard to our present social behaviour. It states something general about what moves men to behave in the way that they do. For instance, if we take the view that men are naturally aggressive, then wars, violence in the streets, and even competition in the boxing ring take on the character of instances of the general principle. We might even say that the theory presents us with the 'real reasons', or the 'real motives', for behaviour which is ordinarily described very differently. To take some specific examples: Fromm's central contention, as we have already noted, is that every human being born, is born with a frightening awareness of himself:

This awareness of himself as a separated entity, the awareness of his own short life span, of the fact that without his will he is born and against his will he dies, that he will die before those whom he loves, or they before him, the awareness of his aloneness and separateness, of his helplessness before the forces of nature and of society, all this makes his separate, disunited existence an unbearable prison.¹⁵

This feeling of absolute separateness is the 'source of all anxiety'. As a result of this experience, there is a profound and basic need in every individual to overcome the separateness and to leave the prison of his aloneness. Equipped with this fundamental truth about the inner drives of all men, we look around at particular social behaviour and social practices where we see that what are ordinarily thought to be very different and unconnected things, are in fact all expressions of the same thing. We now see people and their actions in a new and different way. Certain kinds of behaviour must be understood and interpreted in the light of this newly acquired knowledge about what really motivates every human being. Fromm writes:

Man, of all ages and cultures, is confronted with the solution of one and the same question; the question of how to overcome separateness, how to achieve union, how to transcend one's own individual life and at-onement. The question is the same for primitive man living in caves, for nomadic man taking care of his flocks, for the peasant in Egypt, the Phoenician trader, the Roman soldier, the medieval monk, the Japanese Samuri, the modern clerk and factory hand.

He goes on, "The question can be answered by animal worship, by human sacrifice or military conquest, by indulgence in luxury, by ascetic renunciation, by obsessional work, by artistic creation, by love of God, and by love of Man".¹⁶ But more than this; primitive communal sexual orgies, the wearing of animal masks, modern private sexual intercourse, alcoholism and drug addiction all have something in common; they are different solutions to the same problem. They are all ways of satisfying man's essential need to overcome his separateness.

Maslow's thesis works in much the same way to that of Fromm's. He discovers that man's essential core consists of a number of basic needs (the need for love being the most important) that strive for satisfaction. Once these basic needs are satisfied then they are replaced by another and different set of needs. These are the 'growth needs' -- e.g. the need to create, the need to fulfill certain capacities or talents. People are motivated into action by these inner needs. Thus, people's actions are to be explained ultimately in terms of one or other of these two 'subjective drives'. For example, destructiveness, sadism, cruelty, malice, etc., are violent reactions against the frustration of our intrinsic needs.

A theory of human nature, therefore, seems to have some very important consequences. As we have seen, there is prescription in both political and ethical theories; prescriptions which are justified in terms of a theory of human nature. But more importantly there is explanation and a claim to a more profound understanding of human behaviour. It is precisely because of consequences such as these, that we have attempts to discover a human essence. There is a great deal at stake. And it is because there is so much at stake that I

justify my own interest in this concept of a human nature. We must understand quite clearly what is involved in this notion; what it is that philosophers, psychologists, and anthropologists have been trying to discover. We must see how it is that one is supposed to make this discovery; what methods or arguments are employed to arrive at conclusions that assert something about the nature of man.

SECTION II DISCOVERING A HUMAN ESSENCE

We have seen the kinds of things that we are meant to understand by the notion of a human nature or essence -- it is a basic and unalterable core, characterizing every human being that is born. We have seen, moreover, the important applications intended for this notion; in particular its applicability as a general explanation of social behaviour. But an important notion like this cannot be simply an ingenious invention on the part of the human nature theorist. If a basic human nature is something that can be discovered, then we must ask how it is one can make such a discovery. How does the human nature theorist get us to see what he sees? We might ask the following three questions:

(a) What kind of things do we look for when formulating a theory of human nature?

(b) Where do we look for them?

(c) How do we discover them?

(a) -- In the previous section we considered briefly the views of several writers that may be said to be advancing some kind of theory of human nature. We saw that the description of the hard core varied with the particular theorist. From their several descriptions, however, we can discern generally what may be called the simple elements in statements about human nature. The fundamental terms in their descriptions are terms like 'passions', 'desire', 'wants', 'needs', 'drives', and 'instincts'. These are the simple elements that are generally thought to constitute the human soul. Depending on the particular theorist, the human essence is 'made up' of certain desires, needs, drives, etc.

Thus, the task of discovering man's basic nature is the task of looking to see whether there are any desires, needs or instincts that can be said to be common and basic to all men. But why desires, needs or instincts? Why are these the simple and basic elements that we look for when formulating a theory? Here, we may remind ourselves of the ultimate purpose of such formulations. The theory is meant to have explanatory force with regards to human behaviour. The kind of terms we need to work with, therefore, must have two important characteristics: (i) they must be general and basic; general, because they must apply to a great variety of human behaviour, and basic, because they must have the most explanatory force; (ii) they must be terms that can legitimately be said to give rise to behaviour. "I am motivated when I feel a desire or want or yearning or wish or lack".¹⁷ The simple elements must be forces that move men to action, the motivational drives.

There is a conspicuous attempt to assimilate the language of scientific investigation into the nature of man with that of scientific investigations into the nature of objects. Scientists talk of objects behaving in a particular way because of their elemental structure. To put it crudely, the object behaves this way by 'a certain impulsion of nature'. Similarly, human beings are driven to behave in a particular way by certain impulses of needs, desires, or instincts. Thus, discovering how and why men behave in the way they do, i.e., discovering the inner nature of man is like discovering and formulating laws about the nature of objects. The aim of the human nature theorist, then, is the formulation of general laws about the nature of 'psychological objects' (i.e. men); laws which will then explain the given behaviour of particular men as instances of the general law. They will supply the reason why this man did what he did.

The important terms in the description of a human essence, therefore, must be general terms that can be said to be impulses or forces that give rise to a variety of behaviour. Terms like 'desire', 'need', 'drive', and 'instinct' are thought to do the job. So many things can be desired or needed, and so much of people's behaviour

is explained and understood by viewing it as behaviour that is seeking to gratify the person's desires, wants or needs. But if all these terms can more or less fulfill the two characteristics required by a theory of man, why is it that some theorists use one term almost exclusively rather than another? For instance, Hobbes and Rousseau talk about discerning the 'passions' and 'desires' of the human soul. The operative terms in Fromm and Maslow are 'needs' and 'drives'. While Ardrey and Morris choose to talk of human nature as 'a bundle of instincts'. One might reply that it's simply a matter of preference; given that two words are synonymous, authors choose to use one word rather than another for no specially important reason. But there is more than just preference with our human nature theorist. Although all the above terms seem to carry the implications required for the theory, one could hardly say that they are all synonymous. The notion of 'desire' is different from that of 'need' and both are very different from the notion of 'instinct'. The reason, I suggest, why one theorist is inclined to use one kind of terminology rather than another, is to be found partly in these conceptual differences and partly in the specific kind of investigation that each of them is engaged in. For Hobbes and Rousseau the task of actually establishing with conclusive evidence a particular view of the nature of man is essentially a secondary one to that of constructing a social and political theory. Their investigation has a speculative aspect in which they seek, by vaguely 'looking into themselves', what passions, desires or wants people can generally be said to share in common. Here, the language of 'passions' and 'wants' seems to be adequate.

Contrast this with the kind of investigation done by the psychologists, Fromm and Maslow. The stress here is on strict scientific analysis and discovery. Psychology is intrinsically connected with physiology. What goes on in a man's mind is causally related to what goes on in his body. Freud sees the sexual drive as the result of a chemically produced tension in the body which is painful and seeks for relief; the aim of the sexual desire is the removal of this painful tension. Maslow urges us to understand the statement 'all men need

love' in exactly the same way that we might understand the statement 'all men need vitamin C'. They are both scientific generalizations discovered by scientific enquiry. 'Needs' and 'drives' would seem to be the more appropriate language for this kind of investigation. The language of 'needs', rather than of 'desire', is more appropriate when formulating generalizations about the functions of organisms or mechanisms. Compare 'I have a passion for X', or, 'I want X', with, 'I need X'. There is far more urgency, a sense of necessity, about needing something. One's wants can be satisfied or not; if they are not, then it is often a case of disappointment. If one's needs are not satisfied, then more drastic consequences seem to be implied. If a body needs vitamin C, and the need is not satisfied, then the body will necessarily become unhealthy. Similarly, if someone needs love and this need is not satisfied, then the dissatisfaction will show itself in obvious ways. Moreover, 'desires' and 'wants' would seem not to be basic enough for the contemporary psychologists. We can talk of people having a great number of different desires and wants, but we can also go on to talk of, or explain, a number of different desires as being the different expressions of some single basic need. We can say that this desire is just an expression of the need. For example, the alcoholic's desire to have a drink, or someone's desire to have sexual intercourse, Fromm would say, are particular desires that grow out of, or are to be understood in terms of the basic innate need to overcome separateness. If desires or wants can in this sense be dependent on needs, then 'need' is the term to be preferred in describing a basic human nature. Something similar might be said for the term 'drive'. One can be said to have a driving ambition, implying that the person seems to have no control over what he does; there is something pushing him towards some goal. We seem to have no significant control over 'drives' and 'needs'; they have control over us. This is exactly the kind of notions that a scientific analysis seems to call for. It is an enquiry into the impulses of nature which make bodies behave in certain ways.

If we now turn to the anthropologist, it is no less difficult to

understand why they use the terminology of instincts. Ardrey and Morris also want to claim scientific status for their investigations; a scientific study into our evolutionary past. The object of study is primarily the nature and behaviour of animals, drawing analogous conclusions about the nature and behaviour of a particular species of animal, the human being or the naked ape. Man is placed in a line next to other animals, and his behaviour is studied in the same way and in light of other animal behaviour. It is not surprising, therefore, that the basic term in their description is 'instinct'. 'Instinct' is a word that is regularly applied to describe the behaviour of animals. The lion does not learn to stalk its prey, we say that what the lion does is instinctual; some birds have an instinct to migrate for the winter; and instinct tells some animals that they are in danger. Again, instincts do not seem to be the kind of things that can be controlled; they are part of an animal's nature that drive him to behave in certain ways. "Acquired characteristics", writes Ardrey, "cannot be inherited, and within a species every member is born in the essential image of the first of its kind".¹⁸ Thus, the essential feature about the notion of 'instinct' that is stressed by the anthropologist is that it is something that cannot be acquired by any cultural intervention. It is not something that is learned, but rather something one is born with, something permanent and unchanging.

These, then, are the kinds of things that we look for when we try to discover the basic nature of man. We look for 'desires', 'wants', 'needs' or 'instincts'. The theories of Hobbes and Rousseau have in them too much of the speculative element. What they tried to do is what the psychologist is doing now in a much more sophisticated way. For this reason, I will limit myself to contemporary theories that claim scientific support; namely Fromm and Maslow, and Ardrey and Morris. The terms that will interest us, therefore, will be the terms 'need' and 'instinct'. But before we analyse the idea of looking for basic needs and instincts, we might proceed to answering questions (b) and (c); i.e., where do we look, and how do we go about looking for these basic elements of human nature?

(b) -- While recognising the difficulties involved in trying to attribute to the psychologist a common object of study, we might generalize and say of Fromm and Maslow in particular that their conclusions are based on the observation and study of human beings and their behaviour. Their investigations combine the study of man as child and man as 'socialised adult'. 'My data', writes Maslow, "were gathered through twelve years of psychotherapeutic work and research and twenty years of personality study".¹⁹ His data are derived from the clinical study of healthy adults, and the observation of how children react and behave to certain environmental situations. The same is true for Fromm. Fromm bases his thesis on the 'psychological observation' of adults in various culture groups and on the observation of children and their adjustment to, and development in, a particular social environment.

The main point of interest for Ardrey and Morris, however, is the behaviour of animals. Man is a species of animal that has a place alongside the rest of the animal order. Man's nature, like the nature of any other animal, is to be defined in terms of a bundle of ineradicable animal instincts. We get to see what man's nature is, and we come to understand his behaviour, by coming to see the nature and understand the behaviour of other animals; especially other animals that are intimately related on the evolutionary scale to the 'homo sapiens' -- e.g. chimpanzees and apes. These are the important objects of our study. Man's 'total animal legacy' (Ardrey); or as Morris puts it, we gather the required information "from the animal behaviour studies of the comparative ethologists, based on detailed observations of a wide range of animal species, especially our closest relatives, the monkey and the apes".²⁰

(c) -- We arrive, therefore, at our final question. We now see what our theorists are trying to discover, and we also have a clear idea as to where we are supposed to discover it. But now the question is how do we go about making the discovery. I do not think that a detailed description of the psychological or the ethological method is necessary here. All we need is what has already been given us. It

remains for us to draw out and make explicit a number of assumptions that seem to underlie such methods. Both of our psychologists and both of our anthropologists place a great deal of emphasis on observation. Fromm and Maslow can be said to discover the basic needs by 'psychological observation'. The psychological observation of children and adults. There is a distinct advantage in the study of adults over that of children. There is, however, also an important disadvantage. The advantage is that adults can speak a language and can therefore, when asked, give subjective reports which will count as 'data' towards a general conclusion about human needs. Maslow begins a chapter on Peak Experiences with the following note:

The conclusions in this and in the following chapter are a first approximation, an impressionistic, ideal, 'composite photograph' or organisation of personal interviews with about eighty individuals, and of written responses by one hundred and ninety college students to the following instructions...²¹

The disadvantage is that, although we are looking for something basic in the psychological makeup of all men, we cannot ignore external influences on this essence which will channel and force the basic need to express itself in one particular form rather than another. Such external influences are those of culture and particular social circumstances. Thus, the basic need to overcome one's separateness in primitive culture may be seen as being given expression in the wearing of animal masks and rites of communal sexual orgies; "Alcoholism and drug addiction are the forms which the individual chooses in a non-orgiastic culture".²² The discovery of the basic nature, cannot, therefore, be by direct observation; it entails at least some kind of abstraction and generalization by which we see beyond the particular expression of the need to the basic need itself.

On the other hand, although children cannot give subjective reports, they are, however, examples of human beings who are as yet almost completely unaffected by any socialisation process. We can, therefore, directly observe in children the original untampered article. We have the raw material, as it were, right before us.

Talking about the 'higher' needs of curiosity and exploration, Maslow says that "both in monkeys and in human children this can be openly observed".²³ A little later he adds, "The adult human being is far more subtle and concealed about his anxieties and fears".²⁴

A great deal of stress is laid on open observation by our anthropologists. There is direct and detailed observation of the behaviour of animals. Discovering what an animal's basic instincts are does not seem to be very problematic. Neither does the observation of human behaviour. Both Ardrey and Morris gather their information about human behaviour by "simple, direct observation of the most basic and widely shared behaviour patterns"²⁵ of healthy men. The more difficult task would seem to be that of relating and drawing an analogy between animal behaviour and human behaviour. But even this is not a very real problem for there are "aspects of our lives that have obvious counterparts in other species".²⁶ Thus, we can look and see the similarities; what we find basic and common in animals will be the same in human beings.

The above replies to our three questions furnish us with an adequate account of what, at least two kinds of theorists, think they are doing. What we have is the general form of the argument for a theory of human nature. We can now see the kind of perspective that they are working from; the sorts of moves that they are inclined to make, and the kind of assumptions that seem to underlie the formulation of their claims. It is important, I think, that we draw out and make explicit some of these basic assumptions.

First, there is the psychologist's tacit assumption that children are examples of presocialised adults, and who can, therefore, show us a better picture of ourselves.

Secondly, there is the anthropologist's assumption that there are important similarities between the behaviour of animals and human behaviour, even though that of the former is much less complicated.

Thirdly, there is the idea, commonly shared by both the psychologist and the anthropologist, that different kind of adult behaviour can be abstracted and generalized to the extent that they become dif-

ferent 'forms' or 'expressions' of something more fundamental.

Fourthly, there is the notion that 'needs' or 'instincts' can function as primary elements in a description of the hard core and have explanatory force with regards to human behaviour.

Finally, there is the overall impression that these theorists claim for themselves the status of scientist, and for their theories the status of scientific discoveries.

We have pulled out these five assumptions from a small number of authors that attempt to discover and utilize some notion of a nature of man. We have, therefore, laid out before us at least some of the groundwork that is necessary to support the structure of at least some human nature theorists. I want now to raise some objections to these assumptions. But in doing this, I want to be taken to be doing something more than raising problems merely for those theorists to whom we have explicitly attributed these assumptions. For, although I am forced to recognise that there are other kinds of theories of human nature; theories perhaps that do not claim scientific status, or do not assume any of the above assumptions, I want to maintain that the above theories are interesting and typical. A close scrutiny, therefore, of their adequacy, and the kinds of arguments generated from such a consideration, will describe at least a general procedure or method for dealing with theories that make claims about the nature of man.

I do not propose, however, to look at each of these assumptions separately and in great detail. What I intend is the more profitable and interesting task of considering the adequacy of theories of human nature, like those of Maslow and Fromm, and those of Ardrey and Morris, as explanations of human behaviour. Such an approach will, in an indirect way, necessitate comment on the underlying assumptions.

I move, therefore, to a critical discussion of psychological and anthropological theories on the inner nature of man, which purport at the same time to be scientific theories on human behaviour.

SECTION III 'NEED' AND BEHAVIOUR

The notion of 'need' is central to both Fromm and Maslow. Both are offering explanations of human actions and behaviour in terms of certain basic needs that are to be discovered in the internal nature of man.

But what, we may ask, could be meant by 'basic need'? We have some idea of what a need is; or at least we have an idea of how the term functions in a variety of expressions. We often go into a shop to buy something we need; a man works long hours in appalling conditions because he needs the money; recreation parks are built to cater to the needs of the community; we say of someone that he needs a haircut, and also that he needs sorting out. We also talk of a body needing vitamin C or of a car needing petrol. These are perfectly normal uses of the term, in statements that we understand well enough. But what are we to understand by 'basic need'?

Turning to some examples, we might say that the captain of an oil tanker preparing for a long voyage, attempts to cater to and make provisions for the basic needs of his crew. This might mean making sure that there are adequate nutritional foods aboard; that each sailor has a place to sleep after the day's work; that there is, perhaps, a small room for their relaxation or perhaps arranging at least one day's shore leave during the voyage. These are the kinds of things that we might understand by 'basic needs' here. Compare this with the sorts of things that the captain of a large ocean-going cruiser might suggest are basic needs for his passengers. A fairly varied selection of menus, perhaps; a ballroom, a cinema, and at least one swimming pool; a number of stewards, and a large enough deck area for the sunbathers.

It is fairly clear, I think, that the psychologist cannot be using 'basic need' in the way indicated by these examples. For what is to count as basic here seems to depend very much on the particular kind of activity we are talking about. What is a basic need for one, may not even be a need for another; it may be utterly superfluous. More importantly, it would be odd to suggest that these basic needs

can express themselves in one form or another. The captain is giving a list of what he takes to be the basic needs of his crew; he is not giving a list of needs which will be given expression in a variety of ways; nor is he giving a list of things that are said to satisfy the basic needs. In saying that the ship must be equipped with an adequate supply of nutritional foods, a hammock for each sailor, and a relaxation room, he is saying what the basic needs are.

What then, does the psychologist mean by 'basic needs'? The phrase 'innate needs' comes to mind as a synonymous expression. By basic needs, he means such needs that we are born with, which are part of our nature, and which are to be contrasted with those that are acquired and dependent on a particular social situation. The need to possess an automobile might be said to be generated or created by social circumstances, while the need for love and respect is something that one possesses from the beginning. All men are born with the latter kind of needs; they are biological.

Thus, Fromm and Maslow maintain that each and every individual from the outset has an internal nature that strives to satisfy certain natural demands. The basic needs strive for satisfaction, and unless they are properly satisfied then certain disorders are observed to follow. Needs that are not satisfied result in a deficiency which manifests itself in the behaviour of the individual. There is a direct link, therefore, between the essential human needs and certain kinds of human behaviour. The behaviour is ultimately explicable in terms of the basic needs.

The way the connection is set up between the basic need and the explained behaviour is the same in both Maslow and Fromm. For Maslow the essential inner core is made up of a number of basic needs, the need for love being the most important -- the need for love characterizes every human being that is born. Maslow is straightforward about how he intends us to understand this claim. 'All men need love' is to be understood in exactly the same way that we understand the statement that all men need vitamin C. He wants to make the analogy as complete as possible. Deprivation of vitamin C causes illness; similarly, if a

person is deprived of love, he will become ill. Thus, Maslow's answer to the question 'what makes people anxious or neurotic?' is that it is a deficiency disease "born out of being deprived of certain satisfactions which I called needs in the same sense that water and amino acids and calcium are needs, namely that their absence produces illness".²⁷ A little further on he adds, "It would not occur to anyone to question the statement that we need iodine or vitamin C. I remind you that the evidence that we need love is of exactly the same type".²⁸ The connection in Maslow, therefore, is this: if the basic need is not satisfied it causes anxiety or neurosis. An anxious or neurotic person is an unhealthy person who behaves and does all sorts of destructive and anti-social things.

For Fromm, the basic need in man is the need to overcome separateness. This need must be satisfied by love. If it is not, then it causes in the person feelings of guilt and anxiety -- "The awareness of human separation, without reunion by love, is the source of shame. It is at the same time the source of guilt and anxiety".²⁹ Thus, for Fromm, as for Maslow, sick behaviour is the consequence of allowing the basic needs to go unsatisfied.

'Sick behaviour' will include a great variety of different behaviour. Why is the boy a delinquent? Why does he drink so much? Why did he lose his temper like that? Why is he afraid to tell the truth? The explanation we are offered goes beyond our ordinary kind of explanations; the explanation is in terms of reasons that have something to do with deficiencies in the person's inner nature. I want to attack this kind of explanation of human action and behaviour on the grounds that it achieves plausibility only by employing simultaneously two incompatible sorts of explanation.

The kind of picture presented by the psychological theory, and the explanatory force that it lays claim to, achieves a certain *prima facie* plausibility by giving the impression of conforming with what we ordinarily do when we explain someone's behaviour, while at the same time asserting a scientific basis for these explanations. The scientific part is essential to the theory. The claim that we have an

inner core of basic needs is not speculative, it is supposed to be a scientific fact. Human nature theorists try to give their formulations at least the semblance of a scientific investigation. The language of causes and effects, therefore, would seem necessary. In order for the formulation to work as a scientific explanation, human behaviour must in some sense be seen as the specifiable effect of a specified cause.

'The need for love' must be identified as closely as possible with statements like 'the need for vitamin C'. The term 'need' in 'all men need love' must function in exactly the same way as it does in 'all men need vitamin C', 'rose plants need regular watering', or 'cars need petrol', where 'need' is connected with the mechanical world of causes and effects.

Analogies can often be very illuminating. We can draw out analogies to illuminate something that would otherwise have remained obscure. We can discover whether they are exactly right, or only slightly off and perhaps ammendable, or whether they are hopelessly inadequate and misleading. Maslow does not say that his analogy holds only slightly; and nobody could entertain the idea that his analogy is hopelessly inadequate. Maslow thinks his analogy is exactly right; he tells us that one needs love in the same sense that one needs water or amino acids, and that the evidence that we need love is of exactly the same type as the evidence that we need vitamin C. So let us work out a strict parallel between the two and see how in fact we are supposed to understand the need for love, and how in fact it is supposed to explain ordinary human behaviour.

Both the need for love and the need for vitamin C, we are told, are "essentially deficits in the organism, empty holes, so to speak, that must be filled up for health's sake".³⁰ Thus, the body needs vitamin C; if this need goes unsatisfied, then certain very definite physical disorders will follow. Thus, the reply to the question 'Why do people get scurvy?' is that it is a deficiency disease which is the consequence of being deprived of vitamin C; similarly the reply to 'What makes people anxious?' must be that anxiety is a deficiency disease, the result of being deprived of love. Love is the parallel to vitamin C;

anxiety is parallel to scurvy. There is a direct causal relationship between scurvy and a deficiency of vitamin C. There must, therefore, be a direct causal relationship between anxiety and the need for love. Anxiety, therefore, is to be explained in terms of the need for love.

But if one asserts a causal explanation of this kind, then one must be able to specify and say exactly what is the cause and what is the effect. We are told that the need for love is the cause and anxiety is the effect. But we have to be more specific now. Both vitamin C and scurvy can be scientifically specified and defined very precisely. The same must be true for love and anxiety, if we are to maintain the scientific analogy. Maslow claims to have noticed through his clinical experience that persons deprived of love are not healthy; they are anxious, frightened, and defensive. Constant correlations are observed to hold between people deprived of love and symptoms like the above. Maslow cites evidence like this: A mother and her toddler are put in a room. The child begins to crawl about the room. If the mother leaves, the child becomes anxious and starts to cry. If the mother returns, the child stops crying. Maslow says the child needs love and safety. The demand is a natural one. Moreover, if the child is constantly deprived of love, the symptoms of anxiety and defensiveness will characterize the grown adult. Examples like this have a certain plausibility. The scientific model of causal connection is made to fit human behaviour. But the model also makes certain unfortunate demands. The analogy demands that the cause, in this case 'love', be strictly defined; and this can only be done in purely behavioural terms. If certain things are not done to the child, then a state of anxiety will be caused.

Thus, to establish a causal connection between love and anxiety, in the same way that there is a causal connection between vitamin C and scurvy, two things must be done. We must conceive of love as specifiable and definable in behavioural terms; and we must conceive of anxiety as a symptom, a state in which a person may be, in the same way that scurvy is a state in which the body may be.

But now the parallel, as we have set it up, has two unfortunate

consequences. First, if love is defined in this way, then the notion of genuine love will make no sense. There is no real distinction between genuine vitamin C and synthetic vitamin C. So long as it cures or prevents illness, then it does not matter if it comes in the form of fresh fruit and vegetables or in the form of a synthetic pill. Synthetic vitamin C is vitamin C. Similarly, love is defined so as to leave no room for the question 'Is it genuine love?' The distinction will not be between 'genuine love' and, say, 'insincere love'; but between love that satisfies and love that does not satisfy. 'Synthetic love' becomes as intelligible as 'synthetic vitamin C'. The source of love becomes irrelevant; it does not matter how the love was produced so long as an adequate amount was produced to fill the 'empty hole'. Serious thought should be given to constructing machines that can deal out this kind of love, for it is not impossible that they could! The machine can perform the required behaviour. But it now seems we have lost all touch with what we ordinarily understand by 'love' and 'needing love'. What we have now is clinical love; and the move from this to understanding and explaining the behaviour of the child who needs the love of its mother, or of Mr. Jones of whom we might say that he needs the love of a woman, becomes impossible. The need for love, as Maslow defines it, is a 'deficit in the organism', but the organism makes explanations of the desired sort impossible here. A man's love problems, the kinds of problems we see Mr. Jones struggling with, have not arisen from the organism. They may have arisen from difficulties with his family, or close friends, or from developments in his business. But we cannot understand his need for love as an absence of something like vitamin C.

The second consequence from this kind of model is equally unfortunate. Anxiety is an effect caused by the absence of love. But, as the analogy indicates, what is caused is the state of anxiety. Maslow talks about 'a state of anxiety' or a 'state of neurosis', and the question that now becomes important is what exactly could be meant by a state of anxiety? The analogy with vitamin C must lead us to consider one obvious possibility; namely, that a state of anxiety is some

mental event or occurrence. The deficiency of love causes the person to suffer particular feelings of anxiety. Suddenly the person may be overcome by a feeling of anxiety; it may last for a minute or two, and perhaps longer. 'Anxiety' here is a 'mood word' which names a feeling or mental state. "Feelings are things that come and go or wax and wane in a few seconds; they stab or they grumble. We feel them all over us or else in a particular part. The victim may say that he keeps on having tweaks, or that they come only at fairly long intervals".³¹

Now, if we construe 'state of anxiety' in this way, we can see how the scientific causal model can be employed to explain why the person suffers from anxiety. But it can explain nothing about action and behaviour. The cause, the deficiency of love, explains nothing more than this. If the effect is simply a state, then we have not said anything about behaviour, and the scientific model of cause and effect cannot, therefore, function as an explanatory principle of human behaviour. Something more is needed to connect the cause with the behaviour, such that the cause has explanatory force with regards to the behaviour.

As an aside we might note that one obvious move is to assert a further causal connection between the mental states and particular kinds of behaviour. What we have then is something like this: If the basic need for love is not satisfied, then it causes a state of anxiety; an unhealthy state which itself causes, prompts, or gives rise to, hostile, destructive and anti-social behaviour. A causal link is thus established between certain sorts of behaviour and the need for love. The view that mental states cause behaviour has been sufficiently criticised by Gilbert Ryle, A.I. Melden, Daniel Taylor and others.³² I see no need to reiterate their arguments, but simply to assert that "mental states are not the mental causes of physical events (behaviour)".³³

But in any case, there is little evidence to suggest that Maslow in fact attempts to make this particular kind of move. On the other hand it cannot be the case that Maslow wishes simply to claim to have discovered a casual connection between the deprivation of love and the state of anxiety. He wants his theory to have explanatory force with

regard to human behaviour. But if the above discovery is all there is to Maslow's claim, one might justifiably wonder how it was ever possible for him to give even the impression that his theory explained why people behave the way they do. Plausibility is achieved, I suggest, by substituting talk about a state of anxiety to talk about the anxious person. What was simply a state or mood gets converted into a description of character, or a disposition.

Maslow talks about states of anxiety, or states of neurosis, or states of pathology, as being the effects of basic need deprivation. At the same time, however, he talks of observing the differences between "the motivational lives of healthy people and those of unhealthy people".³⁴ By this, he means observing the behaviour of the anxious person, the person who has not had the basic needs satisfied, and that of the un-anxious person, the person who has had the basic need satisfied. We have now a clear connection between the ordinary behaviour of people and the basic need for love. The anxious person behaves in certain ways; and he behaves like this because he has not received love. The behaviour is dispositional.

The move is to make the behaviour characterize the anxious person. We see that someone is anxious by what he does, and we say that his anxiety is caused by a deprivation of love. In this way the theory that we have a hard core of human essence which explains our behaviour takes on a certain plausibility.

It is important, however, that we see clearly what exactly is involved in this move. The move seems to be to switch from talking about a state of anxiety to a disposition of anxiety. Now, the former, as we have seen, entails no behaviour or action, but the latter certainly does. The behaviour is the manifestation of the disposition. We can explain someone's losing his temper and becoming very hostile by saying that he is an anxious person. This, as Ryle puts it, is to give the motive for the person's action(s) in terms of a trait (or disposition) in that person's character. Thus, when we ask 'why did he lose his temper like that?' the reply might be 'because he is an anxious person'; and the explanation given here is in terms of the

character of the agent which accounts for his having acted in that way on that particular occasion.

A state of anxiety, therefore, gets converted into a disposition to be anxious in order to be able to explain behaviour. At the same time, however, Maslow wants to explain the character of the anxious person as being caused by the deprivation of love -- in the same sense that scurvy is caused by the deprivation of vitamin C. We have here, I think, an attempt to employ two incompatible kinds of explanations. For our purposes we might follow Ryle in his analysis of what it means to say that a person is vain, avaricious or indolent. When we describe someone as vain, he says, we mean that "his vanity is a dispositional property, which could be unpacked in such expressions as -- 'whenever situations of a certain sort have arisen, he has always or usually tried to make himself prominent'".³⁵ Thus, "on hearing that a man is vain we expect him to behave in certain ways, namely to talk a lot about himself, to cleave to the society of the eminent, to reject criticisms, to seek the footlights, etc."³⁶ A disposition to be vain is, therefore, nothing over and above this kind of behaviour. Similarly, if we say that a person is anxious, what we mean is that given certain circumstances, he will behave in certain ways. A disposition is not a 'thing', 'state', 'event', or 'process'; it is nothing more than the collection of those actions or of that kind of behaviour.

Maslow offers an explanation of why people are anxious and neurotic. The explanation is supposed to be scientific; the relation holding between anxiety and the need for love is a causal one, exactly like the relation holding between scurvy and the need for vitamic C. But the ability to offer this kind of explanation presupposes we are able to define precisely both the cause and the effect. A relationship is seen to hold between some specifiable thing or event and some other specifiable thing or event, and the relationship is a causal one. We have already seen the kind of difficulties involved in understanding the cause, i.e. 'the need for love', in this way. The model also demands that we should understand 'anxiety' as a 'state of anxiety'. For anxiety to be caused in this sense, it must be construed as a

state. But construing anxiety in this way no longer entitles us to make claims about human behaviour. In order to do this, we must construe it instead as a disposition. But as a disposition, anxiety is not any specifiable 'thing', 'state', or 'event', and therefore cannot be caused in the way the scientific model indicates.

My argument does not rest on the strong claim that dispositions cannot be caused. We sometimes do account for people's character traits by reference to something else. When asked why Jones is so tight-fisted and mean, I might reply that 'it's because most of his early life was spent in poverty; what little money he had was hard-earned and consequently not something to be squandered easily'. There is a sense here in which Jones' early poverty may be said to be the cause of his present miserliness. It is not my intention to argue that explanations such as this are incorrect. The above argument that I have presented against Maslow rests on the weaker claim that dispositions cannot be caused in the way demanded by his theory. I want to draw a radical distinction between the kind of explanation involved in the Jones example and the kind offered by Maslow. Maslow's theory gains plausibility by making it seem as though it is doing something that we commonly do in giving explanations of people's behaviour. At the same time, however, it lays a great deal of emphasis on a scientific method of discovering and formulating general laws. The overall impression given is that the psychologist has delved into the matter much more thoroughly and on the basis of greater and more reliable data has discovered a universal and general law which asserts a causal relationship between certain kinds of occurrences and certain dispositions.

The relation between Jones' present miserliness and his past poverty is not a causal one in the same sense that scurvy is causally related to a deficiency of vitamin C. We would not want to say that we know the cause of Jones' miserliness in the way that we know that one sort of occurrence is regularly associated with another. The plausibility of such an explanation does not rest on some quasi-scientific generality principle. There is an element of generality in such explanations, but this generality is not of a statistical character

justified by the instances accumulated in its support. We may perhaps know just as many people who have spent their early days in poverty and who now tend to be overly generous. When we account for Jones' miserliness in this way we are saying something about his early life, and how Jones himself perceived his own situation. How Jones regarded his early poverty is an important factor in our explanation. The way he assessed his situation and the kinds of attitudes that he adopted towards it are closely related to the kinds of ways we see him behaving when he is out of that situation. It is for this reason that we are not embarrassed, after giving this explanation of Jones' miserliness, to discover that his brother is of a generous and liberal disposition. Our explanation does not depend on statistics and constant correlations. The explanation does not derive its force from some general principle which asserts that poverty causes miserliness.

Compare all this, however, with the assertion that the cause of Smith's scurvy was a deficiency in his diet. The explanation here does depend on the scientific discovery that lack of vitamin C causes scurvy. The sense in which vitamin C is said to be the cause of Smith's scurvy, is very different to the sense in which poverty might be said to be the cause of Jones' miserliness. Yet it is essential to Maslow's theory that 'cause' in the latter sense be identified with the former and at the same time carry the usual explanatory force that it has in everyday situations.

On the one hand therefore, Maslow wants his theory to be clothed in the scientific language of 'cause' and 'effect' and 'general laws'. The term 'need' in 'all men need love' must function in the same way that it does in 'all men need vitamin C'. At the same time he wants these needs to explain ordinary human behaviour. The basic need explains the person's behaviour because the behaviour is seen to be causally related to the need. I have tried to show the difficulties and ambiguities involved in such explanations.

SECTION IV 'INSTINCT' AND BEHAVIOUR

I now turn to the anthropologist. Ardrey and Morris claim to be reporting on recent discoveries in the field of biological ethology. The ethologist studies the behaviour of animals. Ardrey and Morris presuppose a direct connection between this kind of study and that of human behaviour. The assumption that allows them this move is that human beings are, after all, animals. (I shall say more about this assumption in due time). The more pertinent question that we need to ask at the moment, is whether the notion of 'instincts' as it is used in ethology, can be extended to function in a way suitable for the purposes of the human nature theorist. In other words, can the term 'instinct' have both the sense given to it by the biological ethologist and the sense demanded from it as a basic term in a general principle that explains human behaviour and motivation?

We might begin with a brief characterization of what the biological ethologist means when he describes the animal's behaviour as instinctual. At one time there used to be a common tendency among ethologists to use anthropomorphic language to describe and explain animal behaviour. Animals were described as agents who strive to satisfy certain wants and desires; if they are frustrated, they often become restless and seek for other ways to achieve their ends; and when they have got what they want, they stop looking. Now, although some ethologists still continue to talk in this manner, it would be true to say that contemporary ethologists are not generally concerned with what we might call 'conscious activity'. They are more concerned with describing movement patterns and their function than with explaining animal behaviour as motivated actions. Organisms are said to have fixed behaviour patterns, and these behaviour patterns are described in terms of muscle movements, colour changes, etc. But ethologists also refer to behaviour patterns such as 'aggression', 'threat', 'courtship', 'appeasement', 'begging', etc. These words have a decidedly anthropomorphic sound. Contemporary ethologists, however, justify the use of such terms by claiming to use them only metaphorically. They claim to define these terms by

referring either to movements of an animal's body, or to the effects of such movements, or to the biological function of such movements. Thus, for example, aggression is no longer to be regarded as an action performed in anger, but as a particular kind of movement pattern occurring in particular circumstances. An ethologist may define 'aggression' in a particular species in terms of rapid motions towards another organism, or striking another organism. The definitions are strictly in terms of movements.

Instincts, then, in the biological ethologist sense turn out to be mere descriptions of simple or complex behaviour patterns over which the animal exercises little or no intelligent control. The behaviour pattern is described as 'ineradicable', 'uncontrollable', and 'non-rational'. Instinctual behaviour is a piece of unlearned and unmotivated behaviour. Ducks do not learn to fly south for the winter, and neither do they fly south for any purpose. Beavers are not taught by other beavers how to build dams, and they do not build with any particular aim in mind. Babies are observed to nurse at the mother's breast or at a pacifier without any training or learning process as to how to purse the lips together and suck. Instinctual behaviour is not learned behaviour; and neither can we describe the behaviour unproblematically in terms that suggest a purposive agent, or explain it as actions done from a motive, desire or aim. To say that the behaviour is instinctual is to waive explanations of the sort that include motives. The laughing-gull chick, only a day or two after hatching, pecks at the parent's red beak; the parent then regurgitates partly digested food. The chick begins to eat it. The behaviour, we say, is instinctual. All laughing-gulls are born with it; it is an innate behaviour pattern. The presence of anything that resembles the parents' red beak releases that specific pattern of behaviour.³⁷ The laughing-gull chick does not do what he does from a desire for food or because it feels the need for food. The biological ethologist characterizes instincts as specifiable behaviour patterns that are the response to certain very definite and describable situations. Organisms 'have' fixed behaviour patterns in the same sense that they 'have'

organs. To say that the behaviour is instinctual is not to explain why the animal did what he did. One might go on to give some explanation of the behaviour itself, but it will be like any other biological explanation. It will be the kind of explanation that answers the question 'what is its function'? The animal has organs which we might describe and go on to say what their particular function is. In the same way, the ethologist observes that animals have certain fixed behaviour patterns which he can describe and determine the biological function.

But now, how do Ardrey and Morris employ the notion of 'instinct', and how do they manage to describe a plausible picture, which has as its basic term the notion of 'animal instinct', and which is supposed to throw light on and explain human behaviour? The picture we have in Ardrey and Morris, is in many ways very similar. Both claim the support of ethology and anthropology in stating certain facts about the origins of man and recounting certain observations in animal behaviour. More importantly, both of them attempt to relate scientific discovery of this kind to 'the total human predicament' (Ardrey); i.e. to get us to see human institutions and social behaviour in the framework of our evolutionary past. We can only really understand how we tick, and why we behave in the ways that we do by understanding certain truths about our animal legacy. "We would be far less worried and more fulfilled animals",³⁸ Morris tells us, if only we would face up to certain fundamental truths about ourselves. Underneath a very thin cloak of erudition, we are nothing more than animals; and as animals we have inherited a great number of animal characteristics. We have in us the ineradicable instincts of our animal ancestors. Old impulses that make us behave in the same old way. What, then, is our animal heritage? Ardrey says that we are descended from a race of terrestrial, flesh-eating, killer-apes. Morris agrees, adding even more picturesquely that our ancestor was 'a hunting, weapon-toting, territorial, Naked Ape'. The territorial imperative and the aggressive killer instinct were an important part of the instinctual make-up of these apes. They are also a part of our own nature; our inevitable animal heritage.

This is how Ardrey and Morris present their argument. The conclusions drawn are very important. Ardrey proceeds to show that what we recognise as the desire to acquire possessions is 'the simple expression of an animal instinct', nationalism is an expression of the territorial imperative, social status-seekers are merely responding to animal instincts, summit conferences, disarmament agreements, and juvenile delinquents, must be seen and recognised for what they are. They must be understood accordingly in the light of the fact that the first man was an armed killer. Morris sums it up in the following way: "in becoming so erudite, Homo Sapiens has remained a naked ape; in acquiring lofty new motives, he has lost none of the earthy old ones".³⁹

It is, I think, fairly clear that the human nature theorists under discussion have a lot more packed into the notion of instinct than the biological ethologist. They mean to do much more with it than merely describe patterns of animal behaviour. But, in an important way, it is absolutely essential to their case that they employ, or give the impression that they are employing, the term 'instinct' in exactly the same way as the ethologist. Instincts, as we have seen, are innate, overpowering, ineradicable, and non-rational. Ardrey and Morris must lay great emphasis on this, because the human nature that they want to describe must have all of these characteristics. It must be something that is unchangeable and common to every single member of the species. It must, moreover, be something that is uncontrollable; something that makes us behave in the way that we do. Ardrey and Morris, therefore, must in one sense employ the term 'instinct', and mean the same by it, as the ethologist. How, then, do the human nature theorists convert the notion of instinct to make it suitable for their purposes? What more is added over and above what is ordinarily understood by the term?

We may begin with a minor observation; namely, that neither Ardrey nor Morris are as concerned as some contemporary ethologists are to restrain the temptation to anthropomorphise animal behaviour. They do not merely describe behaviour patterns and organic changes.

Passages like the following are typical in Morris:

The enemy invariably provokes fear as well as aggression. The aggression drives the animal on, the fear holds it back. An intense state of inner conflict arises . . . Its inner conflict suspends it, tensed for combat, but not yet ready to begin it.⁴⁰

Morris at least has a sense of the scientific, even though he cannot maintain it, but Ardrey seems to go overboard. Observing the behaviour of 'a scrubby little female' jackdaw who pairs up with the most dominant male in a jackdaw society, he writes the following:

Only one factor of social behaviour was more significant than the rejected female's immediate, intuitive grasp of all those prerogatives to which her new rank entitled her. And that was the immediate and equally intuitive grasp, on the part of every jackdaw, of the new social situation which each now faced. The creature whom all had pecked could now be pecked by none . . . From the hour of her ascendancy, every jackdaw by oldest instinct knew his place, and hers. She was Number One.⁴¹

Descriptions of this kind facilitate the move of relating animal behaviour to human action; not because men are like animals, but because animals have become a lot like men! Describing animal behaviour in anthropomorphic terms allows Ardrey and Morris first to make the transition from animal behaviour to human behaviour; and, secondly, it makes plausible the question 'why did the animal do that?' where the reply is in terms of motives and reasons. It makes it possible to give an explanation of the animal's instinctual behaviour in much the same way that we explain a person's action by giving his motives or reasons for doing it. One thing we noticed earlier, however, is that one cannot ask the 'why' question of instinctual behaviour. One might ask 'why did the animal do that'? and get the reply that the behaviour is instinctual; but this is to block any attempt to explain the behaviour in terms of purpose, desire or want. We might go on and ask for the biological function of the instinct, but this is a different question altogether.

By animal instinct is meant some more or less specifiable and describable pattern of behaviour. The biological ethologist defines the aggressive instinct in a particular species of animal in terms of

specific movements of the organism. The instinctual pattern is more or less the same in all members of the species. The question we are entitled to ask, then, of the human nature theorist is 'what specifiable pattern of behaviour which is aggression, do we find in all men'? We can observe and describe aggressive behaviour in, say, big-horn sheep, who lower the head and interlock horns. If aggression is part of the instinctual bundle of the species, man, then each individual member of the species must under certain defineable circumstances, be observed to exhibit the characteristic pattern of aggressive behaviour. It is fairly obvious, I think, that there is no one characteristic pattern of behaviour in all men that we call aggression. A person may swear hard and shake his fist; he may attack another person with his bare fists, a stone, a knife; or he may simply sit back and press a button to annihilate his enemy. There is aggressive behaviour in business; or a man may be aggressive in a discussion; and we talk of someone being an aggressive tennis player. What counts as aggressive behaviour in men seems to be all of this and more. But there seems to be no one defineable pattern of behaviour which is human aggression. How, therefore, are we to talk of aggression as a basic instinct, where the instinct needs to be defined as some specific behaviour? The human nature theorist has one of two ways out of this problem. He can define aggression in man in terms of some physiological changes and muscular tensions; e.g. the face turns white, there is rapid breathing, and so on. Scientifically, this kind of definition may be adequate. The biologist may find this definition useful in his study of the organism. But it is only adequate for studying the human organism, it is not a definition for studying the social behaviour of social man. The definition would, therefore, be useless to the human nature theorist who aims to explain why we have wars, dictatorships, and violent sports, and many other facets of human social behaviour. The second way out would be to allow lots of very different kinds of behaviour, and say that they are all expressions of the basic aggressive instinct. Thus, the aggressive instinct now is no longer any particular pattern of behaviour, but rather some impulse or force that gives rise to a

great variety of behaviour. To be born with the instinct for aggression in this case, would be to be born with some impulse to behave in aggressive ways, where 'aggressive ways' can be filled out by a long list of aggressive behaviour. Thus, the dictator may be said to be giving vent to his animal instincts on a grand scale; but we cannot all be dictators, so another man may take out his aggression in the boxing ring. But then, others are not physically equipped for this, so they may, perhaps, be aggressive in business or in discussions. We can go on like this, showing how behaviour that we would think to explain differently, is, after all, the inevitable expression of some animal instinct. We may discover that Professor X, who is the meekest and mildest of men, presses very hard with his pen and writes uncontrollably, and conclude that even he is susceptible to the animal drive.

It is this second solution that is opted for by Ardrey and Morris. Both talk of 'old impulses' and 'the simple expression of the animal instinct'. But there are observations to make and questions to ask about this now. The first thing to note is that instinct now means something very different than the way the biological ethologist originally defined it for us. The instinct is no longer this characteristic pattern of behaviour. When we ask why does the baby herring-gull peck at the mother's beak, we are told that 'It is instinctual', and the 'it' here refers to what the bird does -- this specific behaviour. But the way that Ardrey and Morris seem to set it up, the instinct cannot be defined in terms of a description of a behaviour pattern, because there is no such description. All we have is a long, perhaps inexhaustible, list of widely different behaviour. This cannot be the instinct, because in a way there is nothing specifiable that 'this' refers to. Instinct in Ardrey and Morris is an 'impulse' or 'drive' that every human being, as a member of a species of animal, is born with. But, as we have seen, this is not what the biological ethologist means by instinct; and, moreover, a strong case could be made to show that their use is in conflict with how we ordinarily use the term. What is fatal to their case, however, is not

so much that their usage conflicts with ordinary language, but that they do not mean what the ethologist means by instinct. If they do not employ the term in the way that the ethologist does, then they must also be debarred from recourse to the ethologists' scientific findings on animal behaviour. They cannot, that is, cite as evidence in support of their thesis about human instincts, contemporary ethological discoveries in animal instinctual behaviour. The biological ethologists can describe inborn aggressive behaviour patterns in a particular species, but the human nature theorist cannot use this kind of evidence (nor this kind of language) to make claims about inborn aggressive instincts in man.

The picture that we are left with is a very odd one. We have what look like very speculative claims about innate impulses towards aggression. But now what does it mean to say that 'men have the instinct for aggression?' Or that 'men inherit the instinct?' What is it that all men have, and what is it that all men inherit? One cannot simply say that it is an impulse; this is too vague. We still have to specify and define what kind of impulse it is. The only way to define the instinct would be in terms of what it does. Thus, the instinct for aggression is the impulse which results in or causes aggressive behaviour. But, as in the case of Maslow, explanations in terms of motives are now impossible. The aggressive behaviour is to be explained by reference to a cause; but, as Ryle argues, to explain an action as done from a motive is not to describe the action as the effect of a specified cause. Morris says that in acquiring lofty new motives, man has lost none of the earthy old ones. The earthy old instincts are supposed to be the animal instincts. But these instincts, as we have seen, are not behaviour, but causes or impulses, and these cannot be motives and, therefore, cannot be employed to give explanations of human behaviour.

FOOTNOTES

1. T. Hobbes, "Leviathan" (Library of Liberal Arts, 1958), p.24.
2. The notion of a 'natural man', however, is not a novel construction on the part of either Hobbes or Rousseau; Christianity has a long tradition of espousing the view that each and every individual has a natural tendency towards evil; and in the "Republic" we see Glaucon arguing his case from the basis of 'what is natural to every creature to pursue as good'.
3. Robert Ardrey reports Konrad Lorenz to have expressed this view at a symposium of Britain's Institute of Biology in London, 1963: "The Territorial Imperative" (New York, Atheneum, 1966), p.303.
4. J.J. Rousseau, "A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality", (Everyman's Library), pp.171-172.
5. Op.cit., p.196.
6. A. Maslow, "Towards a Psychology of Being" (Van Nostrand), 1968), p.5.
7. Op.cit., pp.3-4.
8. E. Fromm, "The Art of Loving (Unwin Books, 1962), p.14.
9. R. Ardrey, "The Territorial Imperative" (New York, Atheneum, 1966), p.5.
10. D. Morris, "The Naked Ape" (Dell, 1969), p.82.
11. A. Maslow, ibid., p.3.
12. J.J. Rousseau, "The Social Contract" (Everyman's Library), p.5.
13. P. Foot, "Moral Beliefs", Mind, Vol. LIX.
14. A. Maslow, ibid., p.4.
15. E. Fromm, ibid., p.13.
16. E. Fromm, ibid., pp.14-15.
17. A. Maslow, ibid., p.22.
18. R. Ardrey, "African Genesis" (Dell, 1967), p.14.
19. A. Maslow, ibid., p.21.

20. D. Morris, ibid., p.4.
21. A. Maslow, ibid., p.71.
22. E. Fromm, ibid., p.16.
23. A. Maslow, ibid., p.64.
24. A. Maslow, ibid., p.64.
25. D. Morris, ibid., p.11.
26. D. Morris, ibid., p.11.
27. A. Maslow, ibid., p.21.
28. A. Maslow, ibid., p.23.
29. E. Fromm, ibid., p.14.
30. A. Maslow, ibid., p.22.
31. G. Ryle, "The Concept of Mind" (University Press, 1949), p.100.
32. See A.I. Melden, "Free Action" (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), Chapter II and Chapter IX; and
D. Taylor, "Explanation and Meaning: an Introduction to Philosophy" (Cambridge, 1970), Chapter V.
33. D. Taylor, "Explanation and Meaning: An Introduction to Philosophy" (Cambridge, 1970), p.42.
34. A. Maslow, ibid., p.25.
35. G. Ryle, ibid., p.23.
36. G. Ryle, ibid., p.23.
37. See J.P. Hailman's article "How an Instinct is Learned" (Scientific American, December 1969, Vol.221).
38. D. Morris, ibid., p.9.
39. D. Morris, ibid., p.9.
40. D. Morris, ibid., p.123.
41. R. Ardrey, "African Genesis" (Dell, 1967), p.96.

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